

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
For the Montana National Register of Historic Places Program and State Antiquities Database

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
PO Box 201202, 1410 8th Ave
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Property Address: **116 5th Avenue South**

Historic Address (if applicable): **NA**

City/Town: **Lewistown**

Site Number: **24 FR 1099**

(An historic district number may also apply.)

County: **Fergus**

Historic Name: **Jones Motor Company**

Original Owner(s): **Jones Motor Co.**

Current Ownership ☒ Private ☐ Public

Current Property Name: **Courtesy Chevrolet**

Owner(s): **Bill Cowen**

Owner Address: **119 5th Avenue South
Lewistown, MT**

Phone:

Legal Location

PM: **Montana** Township: **15N** Range: **18E**

SW ¼ SW ¼ NE ¼ of Section: **15**

Lot(s): **Unknown**

Block(s): **Unknown**

Addition: **Unknown** Year of Addition:

USGS Quad Name: **Lewistown** Year: **1985**

Historic Use: **Garage and auto sales**

Current Use: **Garage and auto sales**

Construction Date: **1949** ☐ Estimated ☒ Actual
(source: architectural drawings)

☒ Original Location ☐ Moved Date Moved:

UTM Reference www.nris.mt.gov/topofinder2

☐ NAD 27 ☒ NAD 83 (preferred)

Zone: **12** Easting: **619397** Northing: **5213423**

National Register of Historic Places

NRHP Listing Date:

Historic District:

NRHP Eligible: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Date of this document: **February 1, 2010**

Form Prepared by: **Diana J. Painter, PhD**

Address: **3518 N. C Street, Spokane, WA 99205**

Daytime Phone: **(707) 364-0697**

MT SHPO USE ONLY

Eligible for NRHP: ☒ yes ☐ no

Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Date: 11/16/2010

Evaluator: Kate Hampton

Comments:

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Property Name: **Jones Motor Company**

Site Number: **24 FR 1099**

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

X See Additional Information Page

Architectural Style: **Googie** If Other, specify: **Industrial building**

Property Type: **Commercial** Specific Property Type: **Auto sales and service building**

Architect: **Cushing & Terrell** Architectural Firm/City/State: **Billings, MT**

Builder/Contractor: **Ross H. Bryan, Inc., Consulting Engineer** Company/City/State: **Nashville, TN**

Source of Information: **Architectural drawings**

Location and setting. The Jones Motor Company is located at the west corner of 5th Avenue S. and W. Janeaux Street. The building, which was designed by the Billings firm of Cushing & Terrell, was constructed in 1949 (*source: architectural drawings*). It is a one-story building with a roughly L-shaped footprint. It visually appears to be three different buildings, but is actually one structure. It has a flat roof with deep eaves on the showroom portion of the building and a flat roof with a short parapet on the garage. It is located behind the 1913 First National Bank Building, a four-story, U-shaped building that fronts on W. Main Street. The block as a whole is bounded by W. Main Street, S. 5th Avenue, W. Janeaux Street, and S. 6th Street. The Jones Motor Company faces onto S. 5th Street. It is located in the heart of Lewistown's urban core.

Materials. The showroom portion of the building is constructed of concrete block with large plate glass windows that are partially infilled today with wood framing with a stucco finish. The garage and office portion of the building is brick masonry. The building has a concrete foundation and a built-up roof. Additional materials include steel-frame windows and a sheet metal cornice on the brick building, and wood-frame windows and an aluminum fascia on the showroom. The original garage door, on the east façade, is wood; the contemporary garage door on the south façade is metal.

Massing and design. The building is composed of three parts. The showroom, which is located at the corner, has a canted corner at the location of the intersection of S. 5th Avenue and W. Janeaux Street. Its eaves extend over the sidewalk on the S. 5th Avenue side and abut a brick wing wall on the W. Janeaux Street side. On the north side of the building the showroom abuts the one-story office and secondary garage entry. The tall parapet wall here extends above the roof of the showroom. Visible behind the east façade of these buildings are the windows on the upper part of the taller garage portion of the building. These windows appear to open onto a mezzanine level, but are actually clerestory windows providing natural light in the interior of the main garage. The main garage is set back from W. Janeaux Street with a small parking area. The main garage door is located here. A small parking area is also located on the back side of this building, which fronts on the alley.

The classic Googie corner building has eight bays on S. 5th Avenue, two bays on W. Janeaux Street, and a two-part window at the corner. The deep canopy, which is faced with a tall aluminum fascia with streamline grooves, slopes up and out over the sidewalk. It wraps around the structure, narrowing where it abuts the brick wing wall of the larger garage. The underside of the canopy is given additional emphasis by being striped blue and white. A short brick wall is located under the windows. The windows, which were originally seven feet (7') by nine feet (9'), used to extend from this low brick wall to just under the canopy and lean out over the sidewalk. The windows have since been replaced with a window and stucco-clad panel under the eaves and are perpendicular to the ground plane. The fins that separate the windows, however, reveal where the windows once were and help retain something of the original appearance of the building.

The second portion of the building is the small brick bay northwest of the showroom and along 5th Avenue S. This portion of the building has a high parapet wall finished in a concrete coping. On the left is a vertically oriented, four-light, steel frame window with horizontal lights and a concrete sill.

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Property Name: **Jones Motor Company**

Site Number: **24 FR 1099**

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

It has a combination of fixed and awning sash and opens onto an office. To the right of the window is a very tall garage door that dates to the construction of the building. It is a paneled wood door with sixteen lights in the center portion.

The largest portion of the building is the garage. It has a large, roll-up, contemporary garage door with three lights on the right side of the south façade. A small door is adjacent to it. On the left side of this façade are three large, vertically oriented, steel-frame windows. They have 24 lights each, the middle four being operable, and concrete sills close to the ground. The ground in this location slopes down from west to east, but the building slopes up to the east, allowing for clerestory windows on the east façade in this location. These windows are arranged in three series of four windows each, with three horizontal fixed lights in a wood frame. The building in this location is concrete masonry with an asbestos cement finish.

The west façade of the building is on the alley. This façade display's three paired and one single industrial sash. These windows are vertically-oriented, with eighteen lights in steel frames. A six-light panel near the center of each window is operable. The windows extend nearly to the ground plane, with a concrete sill that rests on the raised foundation of the building. They look down on the floor of the garage, which is located several feet below the street in this location. A secondary door and an exterior chimney stack are also located on this façade. A boiler is located in a partial basement.

Changes over time. This building retains very good integrity. The main change is the removal of the original canted, plate glass windows on the showroom and their replacement with vertical plate glass and stucco-clad frame insert above. The canted fins that remain on the façade show where the windows would have been placed, and 'stand in' for the original window plane. The only other major change is the replacement of one garage door. The building is in excellent condition.

Architectural context

The showroom portion of the building is referred to as "Googie" architecture, while the garage and work areas are representative of a classic industrial building. Googie architecture grew out of the car culture of southern California beginning in the 1930s. This is a period when commercial building owners and designers began catering to their automobile-driving clients, creating buildings that were eye-catching and meant to be highly visible at automobile speeds and along suburban commercial corridors and highways. These early buildings reflected the interest in conveying speed at this time through streamlined effects. "Googie" is named after a restaurant in Los Angeles designed by California architect John Lautner. It was coined as the name of the architectural style in 1952 by architecture critic Douglas Haskell (*Hess, 1985*). As defined by Haskell, a Googie building had an abstracted appearance, often seemed to 'float' above the ground, without the sense of gravity (in both senses of the word) of ordinary buildings, and displayed modern materials and often a mix of structural systems. Car dealerships, being by definition automobile oriented, often borrowed this style for their showrooms, creating a dramatic backdrop for their merchandise.

The evidence of Googie architecture on this building includes the canted windows (as originally designed and constructed) and the expressive canopy over the street. Canted windows that lean into the street at the top became popular in the 1950s as a way of reducing glare on large, plate glass windows, allowing the interiors of a shop to be more visible. This building also originally had lights under the deep eaves that lighted the sidewalk and gave a floating appearance to the building at night (*Interview with Bill Cowen, January 17, 2010*).

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The Architects

The architects for the building were Cushing & Terrell, now known as CTA, from Billings, Montana. Cushing & Terrell was founded in 1938, when partners Ralph Cushing and Everett Terrell joined forces. By 1966 they had a firm reputation in Montana in the areas of education (schools and university buildings) and healthcare (hospitals and related structures). They also designed numerous government office buildings and other buildings types for state and local government. Additional building types undertaken by the firm were commercial structures and resort developments. When faced with a downturn in the education market in 1966, the firm re-organized and expanded (*Dennis, 1974:57*). CTA was founded as the partnership of an engineer and an architect; it maintains an interdisciplinary practice today. It has sixteen offices throughout Montana and the west and handles a wide variety of projects types and sizes (*"CTA Architects Engineers," <http://www.ctagroup.com/about-us/>*).

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HISTORY OF PROPERTY

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A garage has been located on this corner since the early part of the century. The first garage on the site was constructed some time between 1908 and 1913 (*Sanborn Fire Insurance maps*). In 1916 the "Fergus County Mach. Co's Garage," which had a capacity for twelve cars, was located on the site. In 1922 an auto sales and service business occupied the site. In 1943 the same building occupied the site; auto sales and repair occurred in the main building and auto washing and greasing occurred in a new attached shed to the west.

The present building was designed in 1949 for the Jones Motor Company by architecture firm Cushing & Terrell. Today it is owned and operated by Bill Cowen as Courtesy Chevrolet. It was virtually as constructed until a tornado blew out the windows in 1999. At that time the owner replaced the front windows on the showroom building to the appearance they have today (*Interview with Bill Cowen, January 17, 2010*).

INFORMATION SOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

☐ See Additional Information Page

"CTA Architects Engineers," <http://www.ctagroup.com/about-us/>, accessed January 30, 2010.

Dennis, Kevin, "A Management-Conscious Firm Grows from a Remote Montana Base," *AIA Journal*, August 1974, pp. 56-58.

Interview with Bill Cowen, building owner, January 17, 2010.

Hess, Alan, *Googie Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture* (revised edition). San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1985.

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, 1901, 1908, 1913, 1916, 1922, 1922 updated to 1943.

Sievert, Ellen and Ken, *A Guide to Historic Lewistown*. Montana Mainstreets, Volume 3. Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1999.

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Property Name: **Jones Motor Company**

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NRHP Listing Date:

NRHP Eligibility: ☒ Yes ☐ No ☒ Individually ☐ Contributing to Historic District ☐ Noncontributing to Historic District

NRHP Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Area of Significance: **Commercial architecture** Period of Significance: **1949**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

☐ See Additional Information Page

The building is significant as a good example of the Googie style, a mid-century commercial style, and a somewhat unusual example of the two portions of this garage and automobile sales building each retaining their individual architectural expression and function. The garage portion of the building has a classic industrial expression, with steel frame, multi-light sash set in masonry. The building was designed by the renowned Montana architecture firm of Cushing & Terrell, established in 1938 and still operating today throughout the west.

INTEGRITY

☐ See Additional Information Page

The building is intact as designed but for the large, canted, plate glass windows that used to enclose the east and south facades of the auto showroom. These windows were replaced in 1999 when the original windows were damaged by a tornado. Today they are composed of plate glass with a stucco-clad panel above, and are set vertically within the wall plane. The fins or mullions that once held the original plate glass remain in place, however, and are a visual reminder of the original design. The only other major change on the building is the replacement of one garage door.

The building has always been an auto sale and repair shop, and even occupies the site of a former auto sales and repair shop that operated there from likely the early 'teens to 1949.

The building retains integrity of location, setting, workmanship, feeling and association. Design and materials has been somewhat compromised by the replacement windows on the showroom. Nonetheless, the building retains sufficient integrity to be individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Jones Motor Company**

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Description: **Showroom viewed from S. 5th Avenue and W. Janeaux Street**



Description: **East façade, showroom**

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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Description: **East façade, office and secondary garage door**



Description: **Showroom and office, viewed from north**

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Jones Motor Company**

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Description: **Showroom, south facade**



Description: **Garage, south facade**

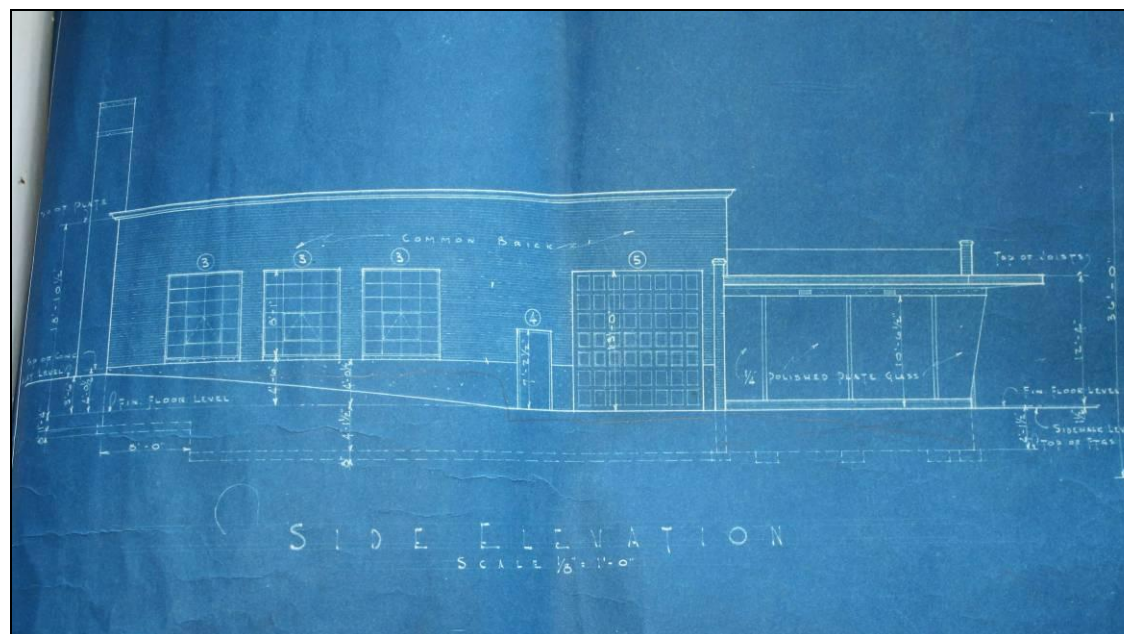
MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Jones Motor Company**

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Description: **Architectural drawings, front elevation**

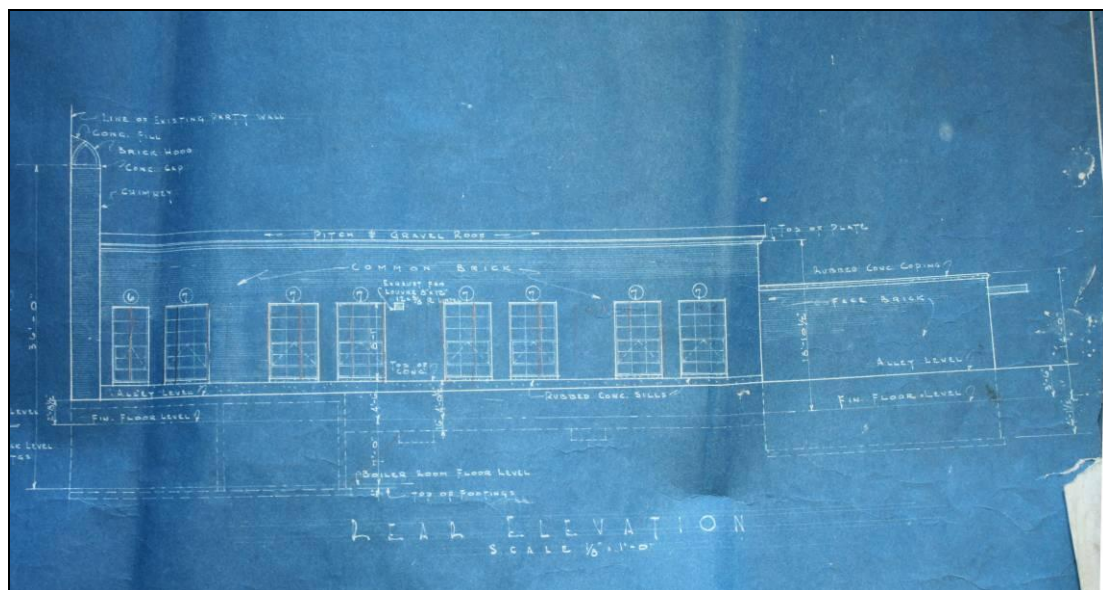


Description: **Architectural drawings, side elevation**

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Jones Motor Company**

Site Number: **24 FR 1099**



Description: **Architectural drawings, rear elevation**

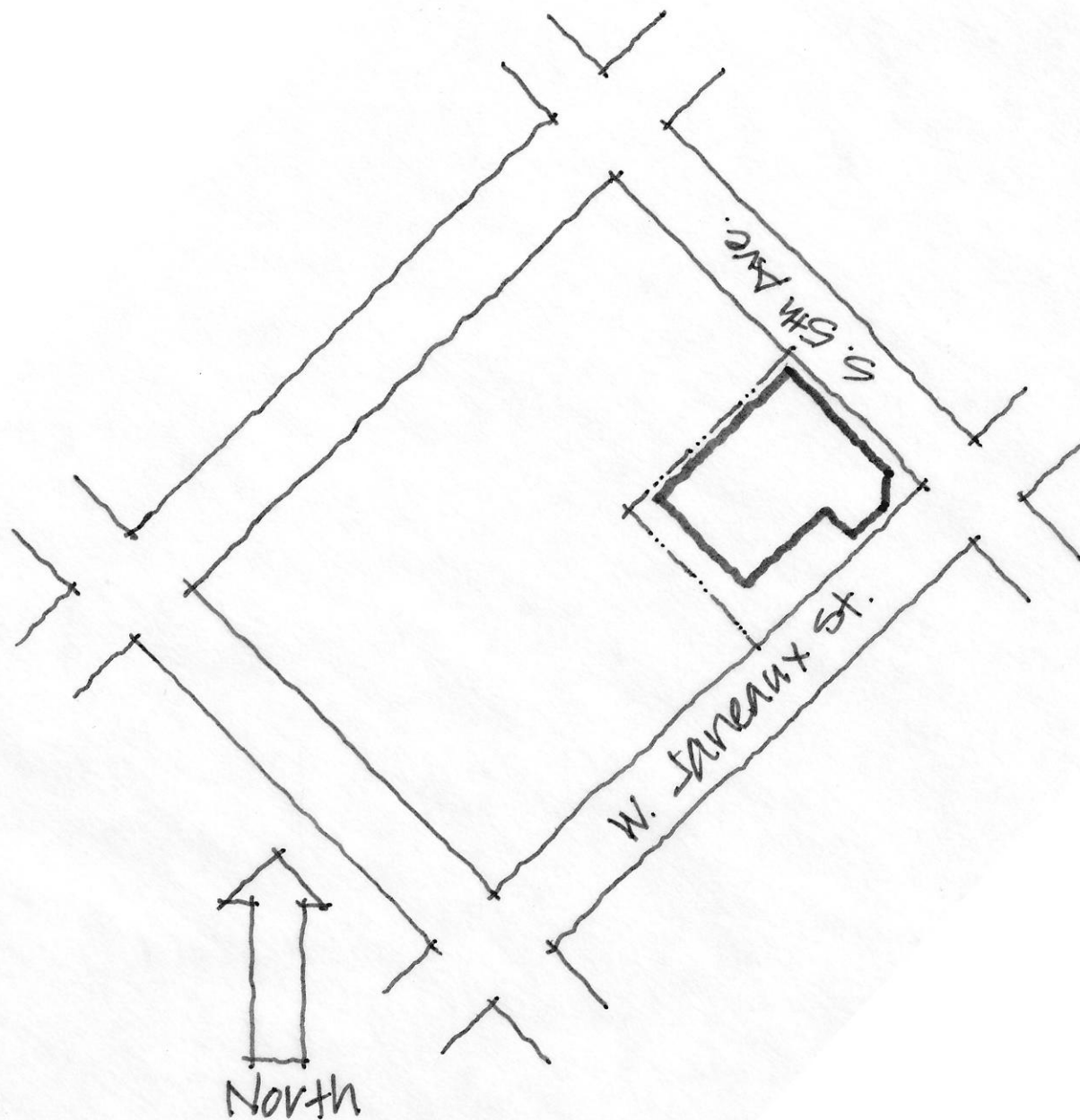


Description: **Canopy detail**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
SITE MAP

Property Name: **Jones Motor Company**

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A detailed topographic map of Lewistown, Pennsylvania. The town is depicted as a large, shaded rectangular area with a grid pattern. Surrounding the town are various geographical features: to the north is a 'SEWAGE DISPOSAL PLANT' and 'RAPIDS'; to the east is a 'GOLF COURSE'; to the south is a 'HOSPITAL' and 'CEMETERY'. The map includes contour lines indicating elevation, with labels such as 4071T, 4075T, 4117T, 4200, and 4250. A red circle with an arrow points to a specific location within the town grid, near the intersection of a major road and a smaller path. Other labels on the map include 'PARK', 'TRAILER PARK', 'GRAVEL PITS', and 'BOYD'. A copyright notice at the bottom reads 'Copyright (C) 2001 Mapson, Inc.'